

Message Text

SECRET

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FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 3348

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

S E C R E T LUANDA 0307

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PDEV AO

SUBJECT: ASSISTANCE TO ANGOLAN REFUGEES

REF: STATE 065-90

1. I CONCUR IN THE PROPOSAL TO MOUNT A PROGRAM OF THE TYPE DESCRIBED BY AMBASSADOR HINTON. A SERIOUS EFFORT IN ZAIRE TO PRODUCE A FLOW TO REFUGEES SOUTHWARD FITS IN WITH FNLA'S PLANS AND WILL NOT ONLY HELP SWELL ITS VOTE TOTALS IN ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER, BUT MAY ALSO SERVE TO PREVENT THE NORTHERN COFFEE CROP FROM ROTTING ON THE TREES FOR LACK OF LABORERS. I DO RECOMMEND, HOWEVER, THAT WASHINGTON READ MY 0304 IN WHICH I REPORT A CONVERSATION WITH THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND IN WHICH IT BECOMES CLEAR THAT VERY LITTLE ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITY HAS TAKEN PLACE IN ANGOLA.

2. THE MAJOR OBSTACLE TO ACTION HERE IS THE UNWILLINGNESS OF MPLA AND, MORE SUBTLY, UNITA, TO PUT VOTES AND POTENTIAL SOLDIERS INTO THE HANDS OF FNLA. THE MINISTER OF HEALTH TOLD ME HE HOPES SOON TO RECEIVE ABOUT 4,000,000 DOLLARS FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND THAT THE REFUGEE COMMISSION HAS BEEN NAMED. AS COORDINATOR OF THE PROGRAM HE WILL HAVE SOME LATITUDE, BUT MUST FUNCTION WITHIN GUIDELINES ESTABLISHED BY THE COMMISSION. AS THE COMMISSION HAS YET TO MEET AND TAKE SUBSTANTIVE DECISIONS WE DO NOT KNOW HOW WELL IT WILL WORK. I AM ALMOST CERTAIN THAT MPLA WILL STALL, HOPING TO PREVENT A LARGE INFLUX OF REFUGEES

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UNTIL IT WILL BE TOO LATE TO DO ANY GOOD IN THE ELECTIONS.

THUS WE COULD BE FACED WITH NO ORGANIZATION HERE TO HANDLE THE REFUGEES. I THINK HOWEVER THAT IF FNLA COULD NOT GET FORMAL COMMISSION APPROVAL OF THE PLAN IT WOULD MOVE AHEAD ANYWAY.

3. ANOTHER FACET OF THE MPLA RESISTANCE TO FNLA WILL BE TO TRY AND ENSURE LEGISLATION REQUIRING ANGOLANS TO BE PHYSICALLY PRESENT IN THE COUNTRY IN ORDER TO VOTE. FNLA WILL HAVE A DIFFICULT TIME WINNING APPROVAL OF LANGUAGE THAT WILL ALLOW ABSENTEE VOTING. IF ABSENTEE VOTING WERE PERMITTED THE FNLA'S SENSE OF URGENCY ON THE REFUGEE QUESTION WOULD DIMINISH AND SO WOULD SOME OF OUR POLITICAL JUSTIFICATION. MY SOUNDINGS WITH CENTRAL COMMISSION MEMBERS INDICATE THAT BOTH UNITA AND MPLA WILL HOLD OUT FIRMLY AGAINST VOTING ABROAD.

4. IN OUR POLICY PAPER NOW IN PREPARATION I SAY THAT FNLA AND UNITA WILL DOMINATE THE GOVERNMENT AFTER INDEPENDENCE. THERE WILL BE VIOLENCE BETWEEN NOW AND INDEPENDENCE, BUT FNLA WILL PREVAIL IF IT COMES TO A TEST OF ARMS. IF ELECTIONS ARE HELD, UNITA AND FNLA WILL WIN A CLEAR MAJORITY. IT SEEMS A SOUND IDEA AND GOOD INSURANCE TO HELP THE FNLA NOW AND I VERY MUCH FAVOR OVERT, LEGITIMATE, PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE AND HAVE SO STATED IN EARLIER MESSAGES.

5. THE FACT THAT MANY WOULD BELIEVE OUR ASSISTANCE HAD BEEN DESIGNED TO HELP FNLA DOES NOT DETRACT FROM THE VALIDITY OF THE PROPOSAL. THE ASSISTANCE WILL BE AVAILABLE TO MPLA AND UNITA. THE LEGITIMATE NEED THAT EXISTS IS ALL THE RATIONALE WE NEED AND OPENLY TO ATTACK ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES IS TO INVITE OBLOQUY.

6. ONE POINT THAT WILL BECOME IMPORTANT IF WE MOVE AHEAD IS JUST HOW MANY REFUGEES WANT TO COME BACK. THE FNLA TALKS ABOUT ONE MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND, WHICH MOST OBSERVERS SAY IS WILDLY INFLATED. THE MINISTER OF HEALTH TALKED TO ME IN TERMS OF SIX HUNDRED FIFTY THOUSAND RETURNING REFUGEES THIS YEAR. YET, SINCE APRIL 25, 1974 WHICH MAY NOT BE A GOOD STARTING POINT, VERY FEW REFUGEES HAVE RETURNED. THE MINISTER OF HEALTH ADMITTED THAT ONLY FIFTY THOUSAND TO SIXTY THOUSAND HAD COME BACK. WE IN THE USG USE A FIGURE OF FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND TO SEVEN HUNDRED THOUSAND ANGOLANS

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WHO MAY WANT TO RETURN HOME, BUT WE DO NOT KNOW. THE LOW RETURNEE RATE TO DATE CAUSES ME A BIT OF CONCERN ABOUT THE SIZE OF THE PROBLEM WITH WHICH WE MUST DEAL. PERHAPS IT IS DUE TO LACK OF ORGANIZATION. THE IMPORTANT POINT, HOWEVER, IS THAT WE NOT RUSH IN SO MUCH EQUIPMENT FOR SO FEW REFUGEES THAT WE LOOK RIDICULOUS. IF THE ORGANIZATION IS THERE, PERHAPS THE FLOW WILL SPEED UP, BUT WE SHOULD ATTEMPT TO DEFINE WITH SOME PRECISION

THE NUMBERS WE CAN REASONABLY EXPECT TO MOVE IN THE NEXT FIVE
TO SIX MONTHS.
KILLORAN

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